about 22.00 p.m. while it should reach Patna by 19.00 p.m. and due to this the passengers are facing hardships; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to change the time-table of the existing Intercity and also to run one more additional train from Saharsa to Patna and Patna to Saharsa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) At present, only one Intercity service namely 3225A/3226A Saharsa-Danapur Link Express is available between Saharsa and Patna.

(b) The scheduled arrival of 3225A Saharsa-Danapur Link Express train is 19.30 hrs. However, at times, the train gets detained duo to Alarm Chain Pulling and other operational problems.

(c) 5281/5282 Saharsa-Patna Koshi Express (daily) has been introduced w.e.f. 20-08-06. However, at present, it is not feasible to change the timings of 3225A/3226A Saharsa-Danapur Link Express.

Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Line

3173. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the work of construction of new broad gauge rail line between Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla section; and

(b) by when it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The work has been taken up in phases and the progress is given as under:—

(i) Udhampur-Katra section (Km. 0-25) — 92%

(ii) Katra-Qazigund section (Km. 25-173) —12%

(iii) Qazigund-Srinagar-Baramulla section — 82% (Km. 173-292)

(b) The likely date of completion of various sections is as under:—

(i) Udhampur-Katra section — 2006-07.

(ii) Katra-Qazigund — 2008-09.

(iii) Qazigund-Srinagar-Baramulla section

(a) Kakapore-Srinagar-Rajwansher — 2006-07.

(b) Qazigund-Kakapore and Rajwansher-Baramulla.	—	2007-08.

Gauge conversion in Himachal Pradesh

3174. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria for taking up railway lines and gauge conversion works;

(b) the cases of deviations, if any, with reasons therefor;

(c) the reasons for regional imbalance in the matter of allocation of funds and taking up projects particularly those of gauge conversion;

(d) whether narrow gauge lines yet to be converted in broad gauge lines in Himachal Pradesh; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to remove the regional imbalance in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b)As per the policy enunciated by the National Transport Policy Committee (1980), new line projects are taken up as project oriented lines, missing links, lines required for strategic reasons and lines for establishment of new growth centers or giving access to remote areas. In addition, gauge conversion of existing Metre Gauge (MG)/Narrow Gauge (NG) lines to Broad Gauge (BG) are taken up under Project Unigauge from 1992 to develop alternative BG routes, establish new BG links, minimize transhipment points and establish connection to ports, industrial centers and those required on strategic considerations. A number of projects have been taken up on socioeconomic consideration to provide access to backward, under-developed, hilly and remote areas.

(c) and (e) There has been no such regional imbalance. Further, the funds are being allocated as per State-wise formula.

(d) Yes, Sir. There has been demand for conversion of narrow gauge line from Pathankot to Joginder Nagar in Himachal Pradesh for which an updating survey has been completed. The cost of gauge conversion of this 189.5 kms long line has been assessed as Rs. 1316.16 crore. The project could not be taken up in view of unremunerative nature, large throwforward of projects and constraint of resources.